

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of PropertyHistoric name: Matson Navigation Co. BuildingOther names/site number: Hawaii Department of Transportation Harbors Division, Harbors Administration Building, Hale Awa Ku Moku

Name of related multiple property listing: _____

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A**2. Location**Street & number: 79 South Nimitz Highway, TMK (1) 2-1-001:005City or town: Honolulu State: Hawaii County: HonoluluNot For Publication: Vicinity: **3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___ A ___ B ___ C ___ D

Signature of certifying official/Title:**Date**

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:**Date**

Title :**State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government**

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:

☐

Public – Local

☐

Public – State

☒

Public – Federal

☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)

☒

District

☐

Site

☐

Structure

☐

Object

☐

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing
1

Noncontributing
0

buildings

sites

structures

objects

1

0

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE/Business

GOVERNMENT/Government Office

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT/Government Office

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT/International Style

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Concrete, CMU, Stucco

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Matson Navigation Co. Building is located at 79 South Nimitz Highway on Pier 11 in Honolulu, Hawaii. It overlooks South Nimitz Highway and downtown Honolulu's central business district. The building was conceived by Hawaii's Territorial Board of Harbor Commissioners after a portion of Pier 11 was demolished to accommodate the construction of Nimitz Highway. Designed by architect Charles F. Wagner, the building was completed in 1952 by contractor Moses Akiona, and leased to Matson Navigation Company, who used the building as its Hawaii headquarters for approximately 20 years. The Hawaii State Department of Transportation (HDOT), Harbors Division, tasked with planning, designing, constructing, operating, and maintaining State facilities in all modes of water transportation, moved into the building ca. 1973. The Harbors Administration Building is now formally named *Hale Awa Ku Moku*.

The three-story building has a low-slope (virtually flat) roof with a parapet and reinforced concrete walls clad in stucco. Its minimal ornamentation, including smooth stucco finish, ribbons of flush metal windows, and cantilevered façade canopy, are all hallmarks of the International Style. The building's trapezoidal footprint is augmented by a three-story exterior staircase at each end and a vehicle entrance adjacent to the south stairway. On the interior, a central stair and lobby divide the first floor into two large office spaces, while the second and third floors are arranged with a central hallway flanked by offices. Although the building has had several alterations since its construction, it retains a high level of integrity of location, design, workmanship, materials, association, and feeling and a moderate level of integrity of setting.

Narrative Description

The Matson Navigation Co. Building is an International Style building with a cubic form largely devoid of ornamentation. Its smooth wall surfaces are punctuated by horizontal bands of windows. The building has a low-sloped roof surrounded by a parapet wall with shallow coping. Two adjoined penthouses on the roof mark the locations of the stair and elevator bank. Its irregular plan addressed the architectural challenge of creating functional space on an oddly shaped lot. Photovoltaic panels now cover much of the roof area but are not visible from a pedestrian viewpoint.

Facing east towards South Nimitz Highway, the building's primary façade features a cantilevered canopy over a recessed entryway on the ground floor and ribbon windows spanning the second and third floors. The thin, cantilevered, concrete canopy spans the center half of the ground level and has a slight cant at the underside. Freestanding round concrete columns sit just within the recessed entry and flank the entry doors that are centered in the building face. The two sets of metal-frame, double entry doors are each surmounted by a fixed divided transom. The doors are replacements, the original having been full-height metal-framed glass doors with no transom. The doors are flanked by two nearly full-height commercial storefront windows. Beneath the canopy extending on either side of the recessed entrance are mirrored commercial storefront windows arranged in ribboned groups. The remainder of the first floor façade has smaller, fixed metal-sash windows with concrete sills: south of the canopy are two large, fixed window openings divided by a metal muntin, and north of the canopy there were five smaller, single, fixed windows that originally served as display windows - but the two northernmost have been infilled.

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Full-width ribbon windows span the second and third floor elevations. Eight-light metal fixed and center-pivoting windows, with a continuous concrete windowsill and lintel, span the entirety of the façade. Metal letters spelling "DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION – HARBORS DIVISION" are applied to the building façade between the second and third floors.

Exterior stairways are located at the building's north and south elevations, providing access from the interior to each floor and the rooftop. Partly engaged with the building, each landing is hexagonal in plan, except the north second floor. Railings are solid stuccoed panels capped with a simple rectangular concrete coping. At the first floor, the solid panels are decorated with a perforated hexagon pattern. Decorative stepped corbels provide a minimalist detail beneath the second and third-floor landings. Each floor has an original fire escape door onto the exterior stairway.

The north second-floor exterior landing is rectangular; extending to the north to connect with a "deck" that forms the second-floor arcade of the connected but separate Pier 11 Building that extends to the west. This deck is parallel to the pier quay and provides access from the north exterior stair to the second-floor offices of the building. The north wall at this location is at an acute angle to the length of the building.

The "deck" dates from 1920 and has scored, colored concrete floors, a double-height ceiling with exposed steel beams and tongue-and-groove decking. Along the Nimitz-facing northeast façade the deck has two pairs of eight-light steel fixed-and-pivot windows. The deck turns a corner to the northwest where long, open, arches provide a view of the quay and the harbor beyond. The shallow four-centered arches have square piers with Doric impostes. The railing at the arches is an alternating combination of replacement metal rails and original concrete panels with diamond perforations. The southeast wall of the deck area is the angled "north" façade of the building. Windows along this side of the building are pairs of six-over-one wood double windows. It is along this facade that the public comes to obtain harbor permits via a walk-up window near the north acute angle of the building.

A parking lot, triangular in plan, is located at the building's west (rear) elevation and is accessed by a drive adjacent to the south stair. The third floor of the Matson Building extends over the vehicle entrance drive to connect with the adjacent building.¹ There is a ribbon of five, four-light windows with a continuous full-width window sill at the connector's east side and a ribbon of four eight-light windows on the west side. The east facade wall extends down to the level of the second floor on the east, parking entry, side. The parapet above forms a low-slope gable, stepping down at both ends.

The west elevation is primarily characterized by ribbons of flush, eight-light, metal pivot windows with a continuous windowsill at each floor. The façade is flush but for a slightly projecting bay at roughly mid-point that frames the interior stair. At the ground floor, the projection includes a rear entry door with a concrete access ramp. The door is surrounded by metal-framed mirrored glazing with twenty-three lights. A second, flush metal entry door is located just north of the projection. At the second and third floors of the projection there are three eight-light metal pivot windows. A cantilevered concrete canopy is set above the third-floor windows.

Landscaping is minimal. A sidewalk extends the length of the main façade, with planters at each exterior stair. Two palm trees grow in a small patch of grass adjacent to the south exterior stair, with a rectangular concrete planter with shrubs and smaller palms. The north exterior stair's concrete planter contains small shrubs.

¹ This adjacent building provides the third "leg" in the open triangle that defines the parking area, with the Matson Navigation Co. Building and "deck" forming the remaining two sides. In this geometric arrangement, the Matson Navigation Co. Building is the hypotenuse of the right triangle described by the three buildings.

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Interior

The building's primary entrance is through the recessed doors on the north elevation, which lead into a small, glass-partitioned lobby with red quarry tile floors. To the east and west are aluminum storefront doors into long open-plan office spaces.

The south wall of the lobby has a wide opening into the larger stair and elevator lobby that extends southward to the rear of the building. The entrance to the stair lobby appears to have once had doors, evidenced by the hinges in the framed opening.

The stair lobby has a single elevator in the east wall that appears to be original. The central stair is of reinforced concrete and is partially cantilevered. It is attached to the wall on the west side, has a concrete stringer running beneath the center of the stair runs, and a chamfered concrete column at the landing turn. The concrete treads and risers have been painted, as has the cantilevered mid-floor landings. The railings are simple metal bars with a Koa wood handrail.

The main central stair and entry lobbies effectively divide the first floor into two large workspaces. On the first floor, the two large open office spaces contain moveable office partitions and desks. The second and third floors are laid out with a long north-south running central hallway, with offices on either side. The second floor is laid out with both larger meeting spaces and smaller offices. Architectural drawings from 1952 indicate that the building's third floor was designed with smaller individual offices.²

The flooring material is vinyl composition tile throughout most of the first and second floor offices, with the balance being carpet. Ceilings are either smooth plaster (likely original) or a rough-textured grey plaster (not original) or have dropped acoustic-tile. Restrooms and locker rooms on each floor appear to have original green ceramic tile floors, and some have original panel doors with a lower louvered panel and an upper panel of obscure glass. Original sliding wood closet doors are located on the second and third floors, near the exit to the west exterior stair. A vault is located on the west side of the corridor, near the center of the building on the second floor. Janitors' closets on both the second and third floors have original service sinks and walls that are bare concrete masonry units (CMU). Some furniture scattered around the building appears to be original and includes a conference table and chairs, waiting area chairs, bookcases, and some mid-century style metal desks.

Integrity

The Matson Navigation Co. Building in Honolulu retains a high level of historic integrity. The building retains integrity of location, as well as integrity of design, workmanship, and materials. The exterior remains relatively unaltered, and changes to the building's interior have occurred as the result of routine maintenance and modernizations to the office spaces. Overall, the property retains its original form and many original finishes from the 1950s, including the original layout and floorplan.

The construction of Aloha Tower Marketplace in 1994 and numerous downtown high-rises have impacted the building's integrity of setting, but its relationship to Nimitz Highway and Honolulu Harbor remain intact. Some exterior features have been added to the site which also reduce the integrity of setting, including the green concrete barriers at the entrance and the black security fence along the harbor perimeter, but these are removable and therefore reversible. The building's continued use as an office and government building help retain its integrity of feeling and association.

² "Tile & Paint Schedule," New Matson Offices, March 12, 1952.

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Some exterior alterations have occurred on the first-floor façade. Originally, there were eight large glazed windows flanking the recessed entrance below the cantilevered canopy. However, these windows have been replaced with narrower width glazing with a center muntin and glass with an applied mirrored film. Similarly, north of the cantilevered canopy, the façade originally had five narrower display-window openings, two of which are infilled. South of the cantilevered canopy, the façade's two large window openings remain, but they have also been divided with a vertical muntin instead of the original single large plate glass display window that showcased the Matson Navigation Company's advertisements to passing vehicles along South Nimitz Highway.

The façade's signage was also replaced when the Matson Navigation Company moved out; it originally said, "MATSON NAVIGATION COMPANY" between the second and third floors and "SERVING ALL HAWAII" at the roofline. It now reads "DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION – HARBORS DIVISION" between the second and third floors and there is no signage at the roofline.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery

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- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMERCE

MARITIME HISTORY

Period of Significance

1952-1971

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Charles F. Wagner (Architect)

Moses Akiona (Builder)

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Matson Navigation Co. Building is eligible under Criterion A in the category of Commerce for its association with the Matson Navigation Company. Matson was the first tenant to occupy the building after construction, serving as the company's headquarters in Hawaii. The Matson Navigation Company has long maintained its position as the primary shipping company in the Hawaiian Islands and was involved with the development of the Islands' lucrative tourism industry. While headquartered in the building during Hawaii's territorial era, the Matson Navigation Company constructed several Waikiki resort hotels, introduced two new luxury passenger liners into service, and launched a container shipping system that would later revolutionize the shipping industry.

The Matson Navigation Co. Building is also eligible under Criterion A in the category of Maritime History for its association with the Territorial Board of Harbor Commissioners, and its place within Hawaii's maritime history. The Harbors Commission oversaw the development of the Honolulu Harbor, Hawaii's main seaport, during the islands' territorial era.

The Matson Navigation Co. Building is also eligible under Criterion C in the category Architecture, for its distinctive International Style design. This includes its cantilevered canopy, smooth stucco walls, and expanses of ribbon windows.

The period of significance for the Matson Navigation Co. Building begins in 1952, when it was completed and Matson moved in, and extends through 1971, the likely year Matson moved out.³ Although the Matson Navigation Co. Building has had several alterations since its construction, it retains a high level of integrity of location, design, workmanship, materials, association, and feeling. However, the construction of the adjacent Aloha Tower Marketplace and numerous downtown high-rises have somewhat diminished the integrity of setting.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion A

Maritime History

The Matson Navigation Co. Building was built under Federal Aid Urban Project No. FU 44(5), Honolulu, T.H., Contract No. 3591, which included extensive work focusing on the renovation of the buildings and wharves adjacent to the Queen Street Section of the Pearl Harbor Road, by the Board of Harbor Commissioners. Designed for, and immediately leased to, the Matson Navigation Co., the building has retained its association with Honolulu harbor, freight, and ocean transit since its completion in 1952.

³ "Ramsay opening new store," Honolulu Star Bulletin, Mar 21 1971. P. D-8.

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The Board of Harbor Commissioners, established after Hawaii's annexation by the United States in 1898, played an integral role in Honolulu Harbor's development as well as other water-related transportation throughout the Hawaiian Islands. An official effort to improve Hawaii's harbor facilities and to expand commercial enterprises in Honolulu Harbor began in 1919. The improvements included wharf and pier construction along with harbor and canal dredging overseen by the Board of Harbor Commissioners. In 1926, the Board completed concrete shed terminals at Piers 8, 9, and 10, along with the Aloha Tower. The Pier 11 concrete shed was completed the following year. The complex's construction was a turning point for Honolulu Harbor, and represented the city's arrival into the modern transportation era. Expanded harbor services allowed for tremendous growth in freight shipping and passenger steamship travel, fundamentally altering the Hawaiian economy.⁴

Following World War II, Hawaii saw a building boom on land and at its harbors. In 1950 plans were made to alleviate traffic congestion by extending Nimitz Highway to downtown Honolulu and widening a portion of Queen Street to merge the highway with Halekauwila Street. As a result of the road widening and reconfiguration necessary to extend the highway, approximately 36,000 square feet of Pier 11 was demolished on its northeast end along Queen Street, and a traffic island (today's Walker Park) was created. A row of mature palm trees that had grown along Pier 11 at Queen Street was retained within the traffic island, also becoming part of the current Walker Park. The shortened Pier 11 terminated in the new office building.

Once the building was completed in July of 1952, Matson was awarded a twelve-year lease from the Board of Harbor Commissioners. Select departments of the Matson Navigation Company moved in immediately (marine, industrial relations, public relations, executive, and insurance claims), with a plan that eventually "all of Matson downtown Honolulu operations [would be] under one roof." Following this plan, the staff of the passenger office, then situated at the Alexander Young Hotel (1021 Bishop Street, demolished 1981), would relocate roughly a month later. At the time, Matson's third *Lurline* was docked at the pier, and its proximity to the new offices made it easy for travelers to access Matson offices.⁵

The post-World War II boom led to rapid growth in maritime commerce in Hawaii during the 1950s, requiring the improvement and expansion of port facilities to meet growing demands. These projects were carried out by the territory's Board of Harbor Commissioners. Projects to improve the Honolulu Harbor's facilities included several bulk handling facilities constructed in 1955. The new Pier 2 facilities were also built in 1955 at a cost of \$5,500,000. Constructed by Hawaiian Dredging Company, Ltd., its new Diamond Head Terminal building was "the largest single-story building in the territory."^{6,7}

⁴ During this period, few other freight and passenger lines operated throughout the islands. The Inter-island Steam Navigation Company, founded in 1883, merged with its primary competitor, the Wilder Steamship Company, in 1905. Wilder Steamship Company had been founded in 1883 by Samuel Gardner Wilder. The Inter-island Steam Navigation Company operated passenger and cargo service out of Honolulu, and started its Inter-Island Airways subsidiary in 1929, which evolved into today's Hawaiian Airlines. The company ceased shipping operations in 1947.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ "Speeches To Mark Terminal Opening," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, May 20, 1955, 14.

⁷ Gordon Morse, "Completion of Aloha Tower is Held Honolulu Harbor's 'Turning Point,'" *Honolulu Advertiser*, July 12, 1953, 7.

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Fort Armstrong was originally located at today's Piers 1 and 2 and had been built in 1907 to protect Honolulu Harbor. Once it was no longer needed by the military, the fort's land was transferred to the Territory of Hawaii in 1951. Subsequently Matson established their local offices and a freight station at Honolulu's Diamond Head terminal, for roll-on, roll-off ("ro-ro") freighters as well as container ships.⁸ (See *Commerce* section below for information about Matson's venture into containerization.) Matson's primary headquarters remained in San Francisco.

The following year, "Pier 15 was rebuilt and refrigerated fish storage facilities added, while Pier 23 was dredged and developed for bulk storage of feeds."⁹ Aside from projects executed to improve commercial shipping facilities, the Board of Harbor Commissioners also oversaw projects designed to improve recreation and tourism during the 1950s. In 1955, development of the Ala Wai Harbor, along with the construction of its parking lots and access roads, was completed. This harbor was largely used by recreational boaters.¹⁰ Upon Statehood, the Hawaii DOT Harbors Division was established, replacing the Territorial Board of Harbor Commissioners.

In 1974, Matson Navigation Co. assumed the leases on terminals at Sand Island, Honolulu, formerly occupied by Seatrain. In the early 1980s, Matson invested \$15 million in facilities at that site (which was matched by a State of Hawaii investment), thereby consolidating its terminal operations in one location.¹¹

Commerce

The Matson Navigation Co. Building is closely associated with the Matson Navigation Company, now called Matson, Inc., which has long been the primary ocean shipping company in the Hawaiian Islands. The company played an integral role in the development of Hawaii's tourism and commercial shipping industries. Prior to leasing the building from the Board of Harbor Commissioners, the Matson Navigation Company occupied offices in the Alexander Young Building in downtown Honolulu and at Pier 9.¹² Seeking to consolidate their passenger and freight operations under one roof, the Matson Navigation Company began looking for a new headquarters in the late 1940s. Because the new building would be attached to the pier complex where the company's cruise ships, such as the *Lurline*, docked to unload and reload passengers, the waterfront location was extremely desirable for the Matson Navigation Company.

The Matson Navigation Company was well established in Hawaii by the time it moved into the building in 1952. The company's passenger service had fueled Hawaii's tourism industry by introducing mass tourism to the islands. In 1912, the company began construction on two luxury passenger liners. The *Matsonia* sailed from San Francisco for the first time in February 1914, and the *Manoa* followed in March. After the United States entered World War I, several Matson Navigation Company ships were drafted into service and shipping to the Islands

⁸ "Matson Co. plans to shift its container freight station," *Honolulu Advertiser*, March 31, 1972. P. D-6.

⁹ Hawaii'i, *Oahu Commercial Harbors*, IV-9.

¹⁰ Ray Pendleton, "Transpac Has Grown Along with Hawai'i." *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, November 9, 2008. Accessed February 1, 2014. http://archives.starbulletin.com/content/20081109_water_ways.

¹¹ William J. Worden. *Cargoes: Matson's First Century in the Pacific*. Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1981, 157.

¹² "Matson Seeking Central Office Site at Pier 11," *Honolulu Advertiser*, March 16, 1950, 8.

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declined. When the American-Hawaiian Steamship Company left the Hawaiian sugar shipping industry in 1916, the Matson Navigation Company was in position to dominate the industry after the war ended. By 1917, the company was offering weekly passenger service to Honolulu from San Francisco.

Matson Navigation Company underwent significant expansion during the 1920s and 1930s. After the Aloha Tower and the passenger terminals at Piers 8, 9, 10 and 11 were finished, the Matson Navigation Company used the complex for their cruise ships. The company also began investing in non-shipping enterprises, such as real estate and sugar processing. In 1927, the company's first luxury hotel, the Royal Hawaiian Hotel, was completed in Waikiki. Efforts to expand the company's service routes also began during the 1920s, and in 1928 the Matson Navigation Company began offering service routes from ports in Australia and New Zealand as well as service to Fiji and Tahiti.¹³ Already a dominant force in passenger travel, the company's luxury passenger liners were instrumental to the tourism industry's development. The Matson Navigation Company purchased the struggling Oceanic Steamship Company in 1926 and by 1930, Matson owned thirty-five vessels. In 1932 they purchased the Los Angeles Steamship Company (LASSCO) and the Moana Hotel in Waikiki.¹⁴

Hawaii's thriving tourism industry dramatically declined in the years immediately following the stock market crash of 1929 and subsequent Great Depression. In 1933, only 10,111 people visited the Islands. The industry experienced a slow, steady revival during the late 1930s and by 1941, nearly 32,000 people traveled to the Hawaiian Islands. Simultaneously, the passenger air industry slowly began to develop. In 1936, Pan American Airlines offered the first passenger flight from the continental U.S. to Honolulu. These early flights lasted between eighteen and twenty hours.¹⁵

The December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor and the United States' entry into World War II restricted travel to Hawaii. The Matson Navigation Company's luxury passenger liners and freight ships were drafted into U.S. Military service.¹⁶ After the war, the airline industry continued to expand as C-54 cargo planes were cheaply converted into passenger planes. Throughout the 1940s and 50s, several airlines added stops in Hawaii to their routes. Cheaper airline fares during the 1950s dramatically reduced the amount of cruise ship traffic to Hawaii. It was during this pivotal era, on the brink of the jet age, that Matson moved into the newly completed building in 1952. By 1955, 77 percent of all visitors to the Islands arrived by plane.¹⁷ As cruise ship traffic to Hawaii began to decline during this time, the Matson Navigation Company invested in other facets of the tourism industry, including building the Princess Kaiulani Hotel in Waikiki in 1955.

While Matson was not the first shipping company to implement containerization, it became one of the most competitive once the practice was established. Advances made around the world in container shipping systems had occurred before, during, and after World War II, but the first commercial containerized shipments were implemented in 1956 on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts by former trucking company owner Malcolm McLean. McLean's shipping company, SeaLand Industries, provided the "first safe, reliable, and cost-effective approach to transporting

¹³ Blume, *Historical Dictionary of the U.S. Maritime Industry*, 310.

¹⁴ Stindt, *Matson's Century of Ships*, 99.

¹⁵ Hibbard and Salbosa, *Designing Paradise*, 56.

¹⁶ "History," Matson, accessed January 30, 2014, http://www.matson.com/corporate/about_us/history.html.

¹⁷ Hibbard and Salbosa, *Designing Paradise*, 56.

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containerized cargo.” Once McLean released his patented design to the shipping industry (a move which ensured SeaLand’s success by spurring overall industry growth), the international standardization of shipping containers was conceived.¹⁸

In 1956, amidst these global developments in containerization and the decline of passenger cruise travel, Matson established an in-house research department: the “steam ship industry’s first integrated research department.”¹⁹ Recommendations were made to “develop seagoing container service to the islands.”²⁰ In 1958, after two years of research, Matson launched its first freight container voyage from San Francisco, California to Hawaii, using standard-sized shipping containers 24 feet in length. In 1959, upon recognizing containerization’s potential, and the growing dominance of passenger air travel over cruise ship travel, Matson sold their non-shipping assets, including its Waikiki hotels to the Sheraton Corporation.

Matson was acquired by Alexander & Baldwin in 1964. In 1965, Matson formed a subsidiary, the Matson Research Corporation, devoted fully to its ongoing research in the “management sciences for industry, commerce, and government.”²¹

In 1970, Matson terminated its passenger and container freight services to the South Pacific, and sold its last two luxury liners, the *Monterey* and the *Mariposa*. This move allowed the company to focus solely on its mainland-to-Hawaii freight line services.²² Matson remains the dominant cargo shipping company in Hawaii to this day.

Criterion C

Architecture

The Matson Navigation Co. Building was designed by architect Charles F. Wagner, who was an American Institute of Architects (AIA) member in Hawaii between 1951 and 1952.²³ The building is an excellent example of International Style architecture in Hawaii built during the territorial era. Completed in July of 1952, it had been projected to cost \$250,000, but was ultimately constructed for \$307,000 by contractor Moses Akiona.²⁴

Wagner’s design respected the scale and massing of the adjacent Pier 8-11 buildings, while displaying several character-defining features of the International Style including the flat roof, smooth stuccoed walls, and expanses of ribbon windows. In keeping with the International Style’s rejection of grand lobbies, the building’s lobby has no hierarchy in the building’s interior scheme. The office spaces are streamlined in design, and the building’s sculptural exterior staircases are appropriate for Hawaii’s mild climate.

¹⁸ Anthony J. Mayo and Nitin Nohria, “The Truck Driver Who Reinvented Shipping,” Working Knowledge, Harvard Business School, October 3, 2005. Accessed on April 28, 2020, at <https://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/the-truck-driver-who-reinvented-shipping>

¹⁹ William J. Worden. *Cargoes: Matson’s First Century in the Pacific*. Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1981, 143.

²⁰ William J. Worden. *Cargoes: Matson’s First Century in the Pacific*. Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1981, 143.

²¹ “Research subsidiary is formed by Matson,” *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, March 9, 1965. P. 27.

²² Carl Wright, “Matson Quitting S. Pacific,” *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, August 13, 1970. P. 1.

²³ “Charles Frederick Wagner,” The AIA Historical Directory of American Architects, accessed February 3, 2014, <http://public.aia.org/sites/hdoaa/wiki/Wiki%20Pages/ahd1046711.aspx>.

²⁴ “Impressive New Pier Building Will House All Matson Offices,” *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, July 11, 1952, 12.

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Transporting construction materials to Hawaii was costly, and the original International Style design language of steel-framed curtain walls and glass was typically not followed.²⁵ Instead, reinforced concrete was used for building's structural systems and walls. The Matson Navigation Co. Building is emblematic of this Hawaiian expression of International Style, using primarily reinforced concrete in its construction.

International Style, one of the most ubiquitous styles of the Modern Movement. It is rooted in 1920s and 30s Europe, but it became a preferred style for commercial and public buildings during the 1950s, 60s, and 70s in the United States. The style's character-defining features include the absence of ornamentation; asymmetrical buildings with flat roofs; expansive, horizontal bands of windows; smooth wall surfaces; and cantilevered building sections.²⁶ The hierarchy present in American architecture prior to the emergence of Modernism and the International Style, which distinguished public and private spaces, was also absent in design.²⁷ Though the International Style was grounded in Modernism's principles of achieving streamlined design and efficient building methodologies, the pragmatic style's functionality and utilitarianism was ideal for representing the United States' economic confidence and industrial strength

²⁵ Fung Associates, Inc., *Hawai'i Modernism Context Study*, 3-19.

²⁶ Robinson and Foell, *Growth, Efficiency, and Modernism*, 14.

²⁷ Robinson and Foell, *Growth, Efficiency, and Modernism*, 30.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☒ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office

Matson Navigation Co. Building

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☐ Other State agency

☐ Federal agency

☐ Local government

☐ University

☐ Other

Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

2. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

3. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

4. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☒ NAD 1983

1. Zone: 04Q Easting: 617768 Northing: 2356713

2. Zone: _____ Easting: _____ Northing: _____

3. Zone: _____ Easting: _____ Northing: _____

4. Zone: _____ Easting : _____ Northing: _____

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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The National Register of Historic Places boundary for Matson Navigation Co. Building consists of the building's footprint and includes the property's hardscape features but excludes the rear parking lot.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The National Register of Historic Places boundary consists of the original section of land designated for the construction of Matson Navigation Co. Building in 1950, after the northwest end of the Pier 11 shed was demolished. Construction commenced in 1952 and the building had occupied this parcel of land since that time. The boundary includes the building's footprint and hardscape features, but excludes the rear parking lot which is not a contributing element to Matson Navigation Co. Building's significance.

11. Form Prepared By

Original Form prepared by:

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telephone: (808) 536-0556
date: April 27, 2020

Matson Navigation Co. Building
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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Matson Navigation Co. Building

City or Vicinity: Honolulu

County: Honolulu **State:** Hawaii

Photographer: Charles Greenleaf

Date Photographed: November 2012

Matson Navigation Co. Building

Name of Property

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County and State

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo 1 of 10. (HI_HonoluluCounty_DOTHarborsDivision_0001)

East façade, camera facing southwest

Photo 2 of 10. (HI_HonoluluCounty_DOTHarborsDivision_0002)

Southeast elevations (left) and west façade (right), camera facing north

Photo 3 of 10. (HI_HonoluluCounty_DOTHarborsDivision_0003)

East façade, camera facing northwest

Photo 4 of 10. (HI_HonoluluCounty_DOTHarborsDivision_0004)

West rear elevation, camera facing east

Photo 5 of 10. (HI_HonoluluCounty_DOTHarborsDivision_0005)

West (left) and southeast (right) rear elevations, camera facing southeast

Photo 6 of 10. (HI_HonoluluCounty_DOTHarborsDivision_0006)

Interior first-story lobby, camera facing northwest

Photo 7 of 10. (HI_HonoluluCounty_DOTHarborsDivision_0007)

Interior first-story lobby, camera facing southwest

Photo 8 of 10. (HI_HonoluluCounty_DOTHarborsDivision_0008)

First-story office space, camera facing northwest

Photo 9 of 10. (HI_HonoluluCounty_DOTHarborsDivision_0009)

Central stairwell, view from the first floor, camera facing north

Photo 10 of 10. (HI_HonoluluCounty_DOTHarborsDivision_0010)

Second-story hallway, camera facing northwest

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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National Park Service

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- Figure 2:** Matson Navigation Co. Building USGS Topographic Map
- Figure 3:** Sanborn Fire Map, Honolulu Harbor. 1950.
- Figure 4:** Sanborn Fire Map, Honolulu Harbor. 1950.
- Figure 5:** Tile & Paint Schedule. Approved by Board of Harbor Commissioners' Manager and Chief Engineer Benjamin F. Rush. March 12, 1952
- Figure 6:** Matson Navigation Co. Building and South Nimitz Highway under construction, camera facing south. March 24, 1952
- Figure 7:** Aerial view of Matson Navigation Co. Building and South Nimitz Highway under construction, camera facing northeast. January 21, 1952
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- Figure 9:** Matson Navigation Co. Building east façade, camera facing northwest. Ca. 1952

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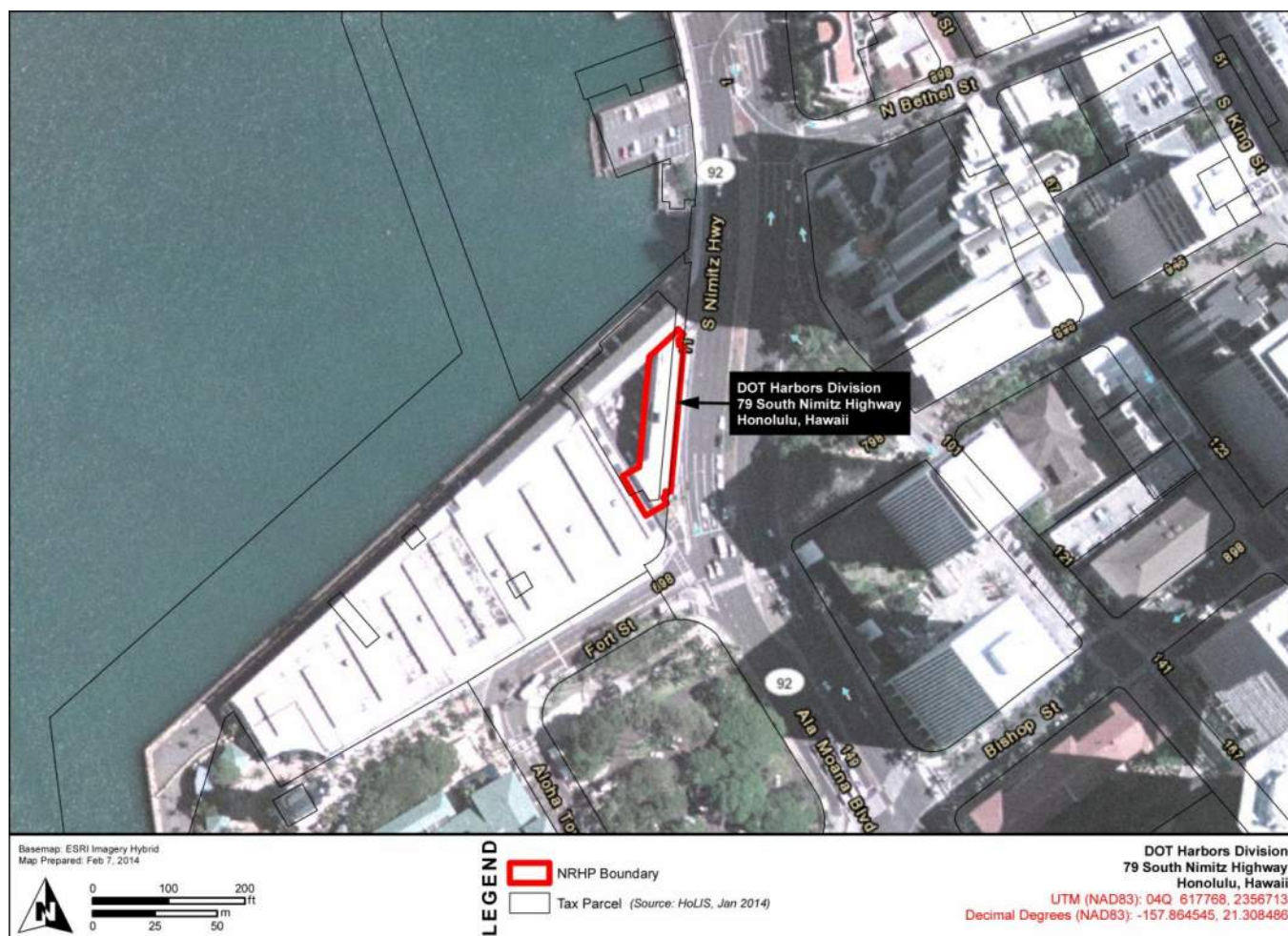
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Figure 1: Matson Navigation Co. Building Historic Boundary Map

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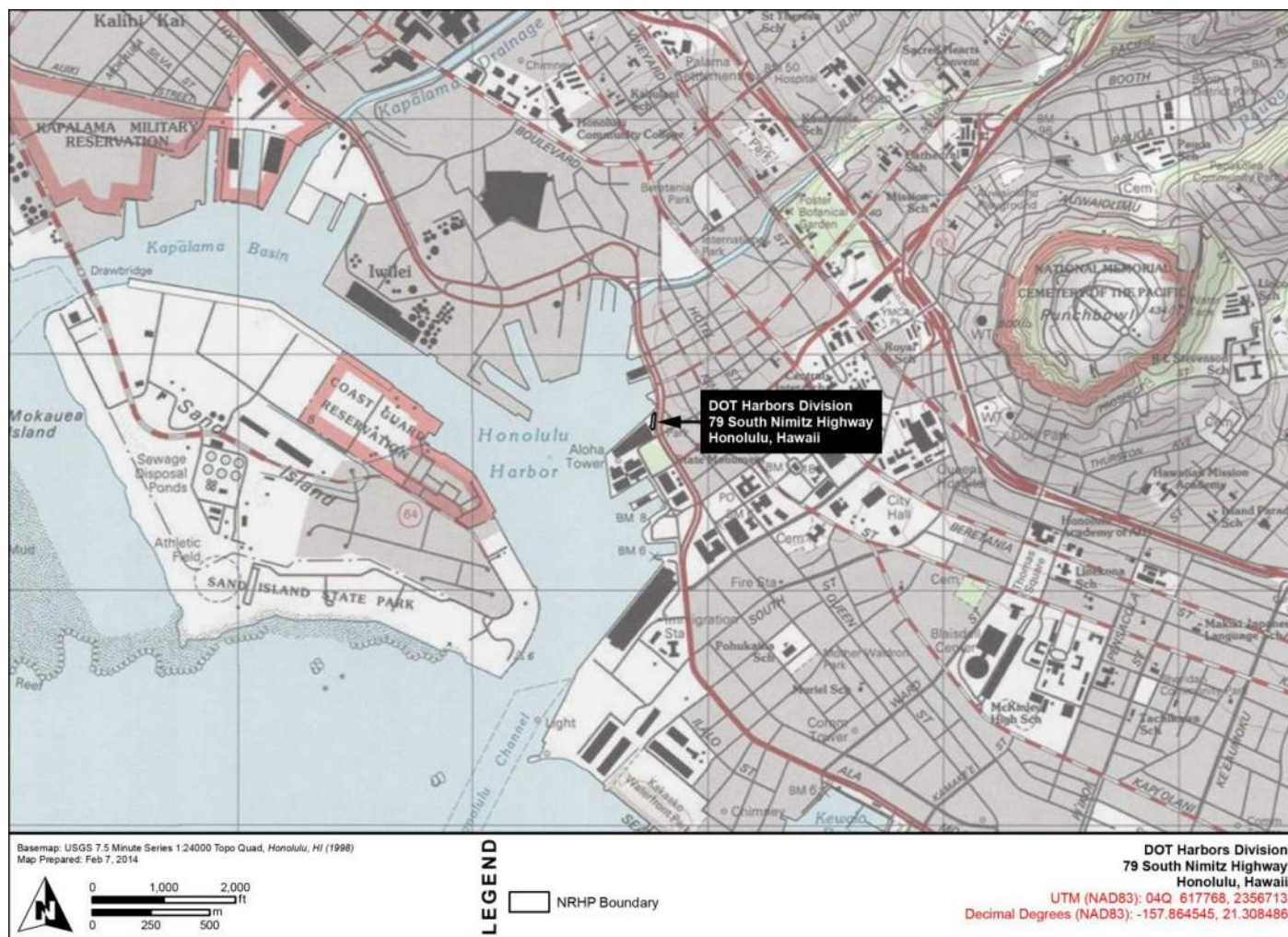
Section number Additional DocumentationPage 23

Figure 2: Matson Navigation Co. Building USGS Topographic Map, 2014

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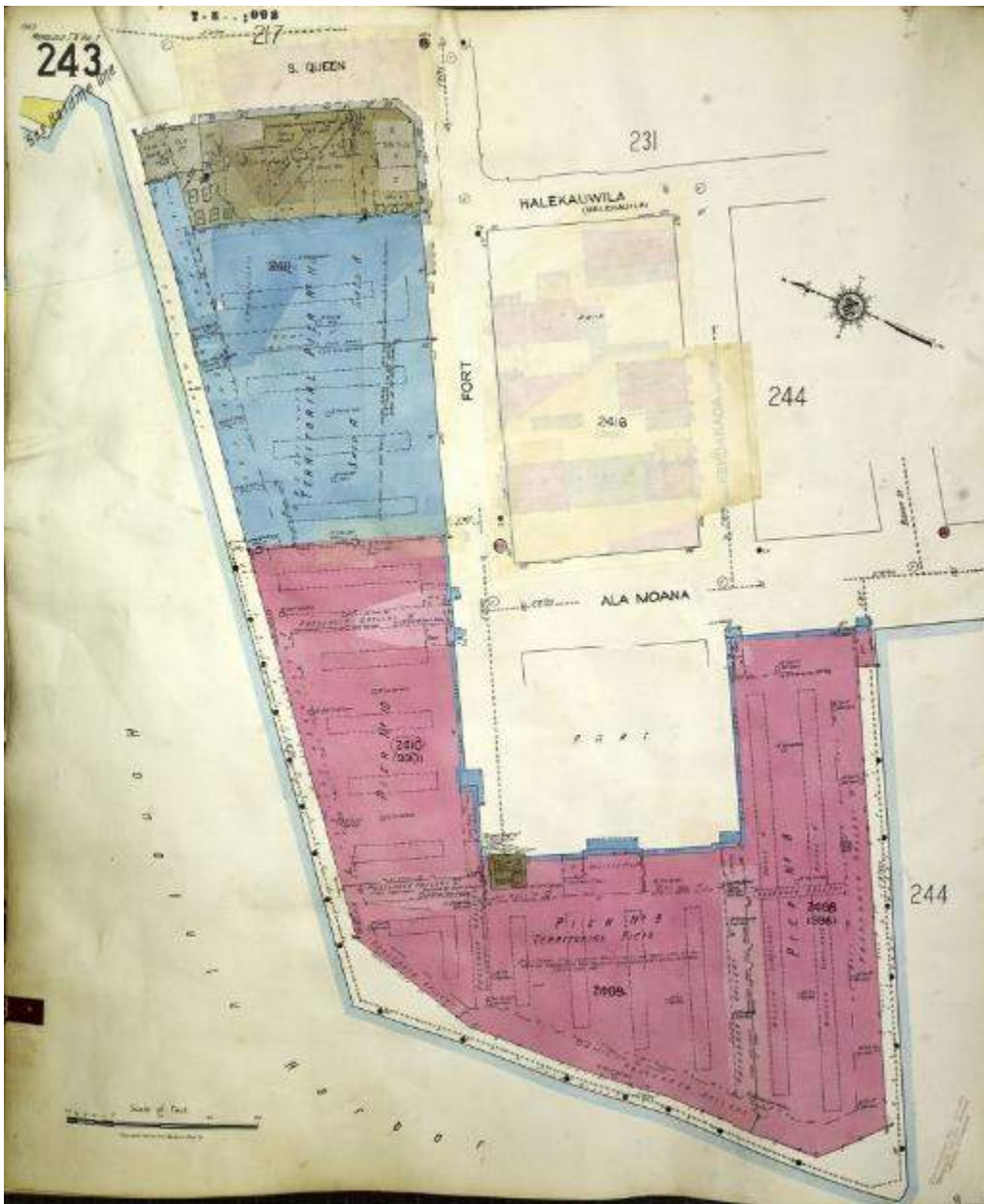


Figure 3: Sanborn Fire Map, 1950. Piers 9, 10, and 11 and road configuration prior to harbor changes and road widening and reconfigurations.

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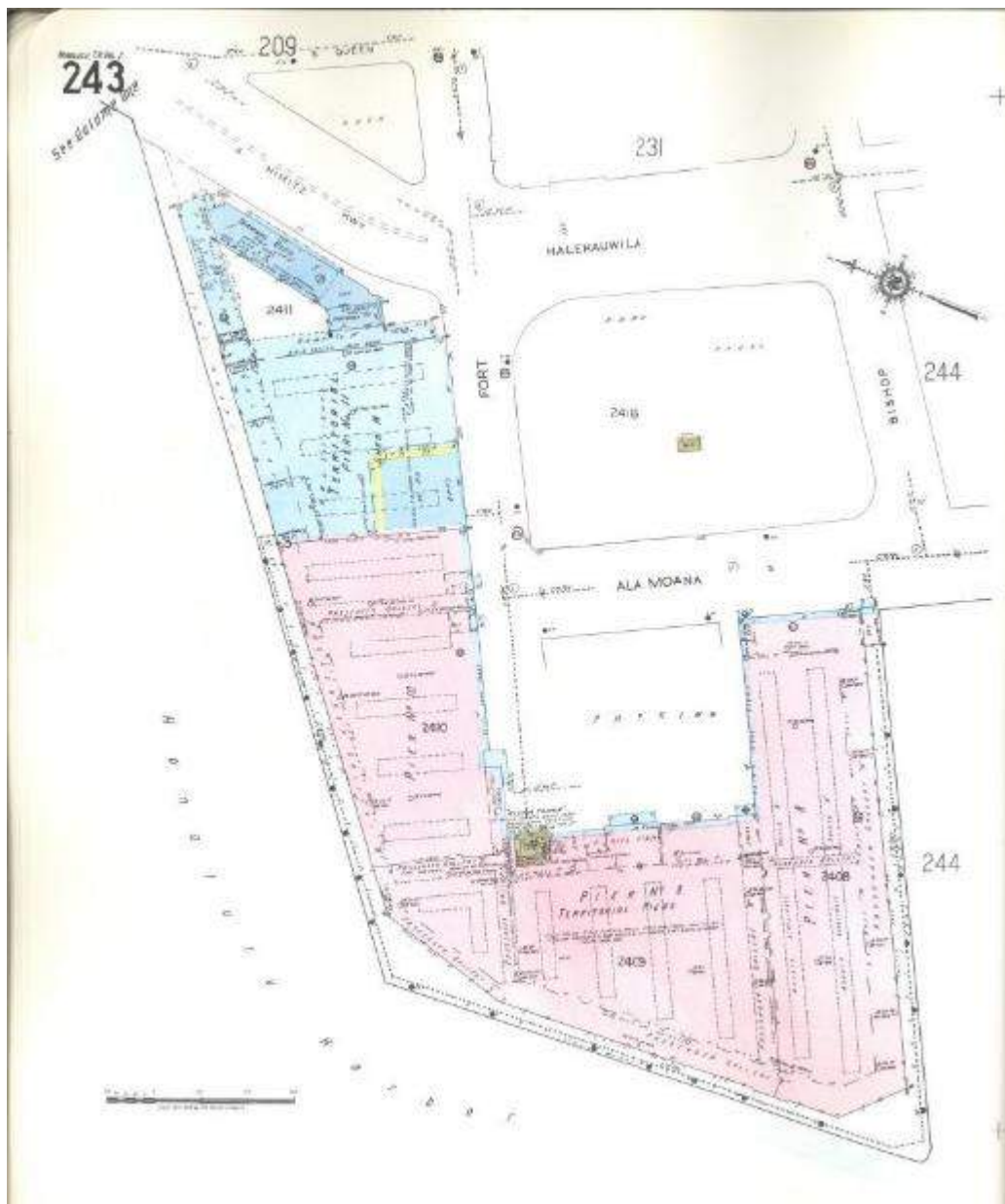


Figure 4: Sanborn Fire Map, 1956. Piers 9, 10, and 11 and road alignments post harbor changes and road widening and reconfigurations.

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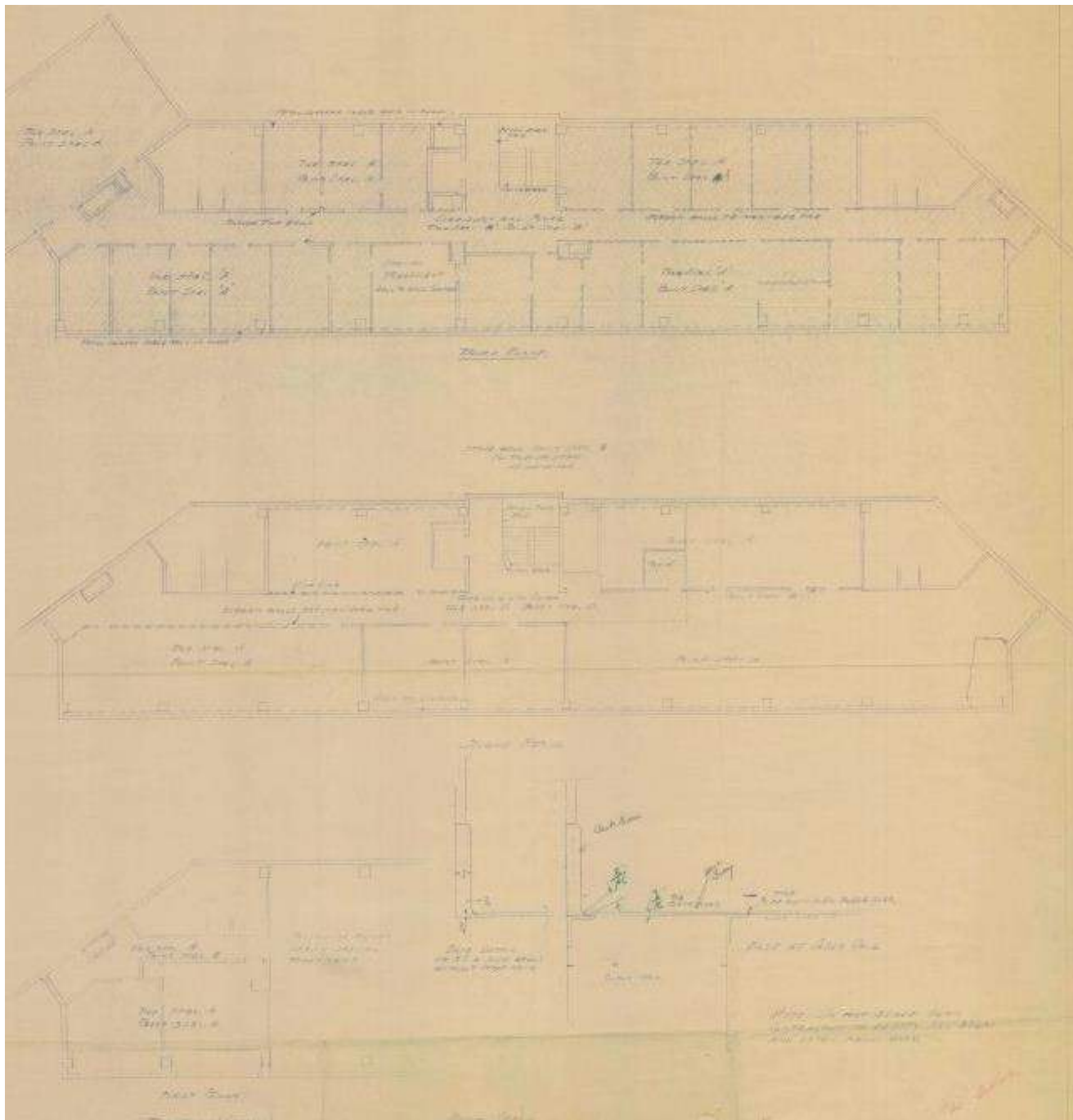


Figure 5: Tile & Paint Schedule. Approved by Board of Harbor Commissioners' Manager and Chief Engineer Benjamin F. Rush. March 12, 1952

Location: Matson Navigation Co. Building, Honolulu, Hawaii

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Figure 6: Matson Navigation Co. Building and South Nimitz Highway under construction, camera facing south. March 24, 1952

Location: Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum Library and Archives, Honolulu, Hawaii

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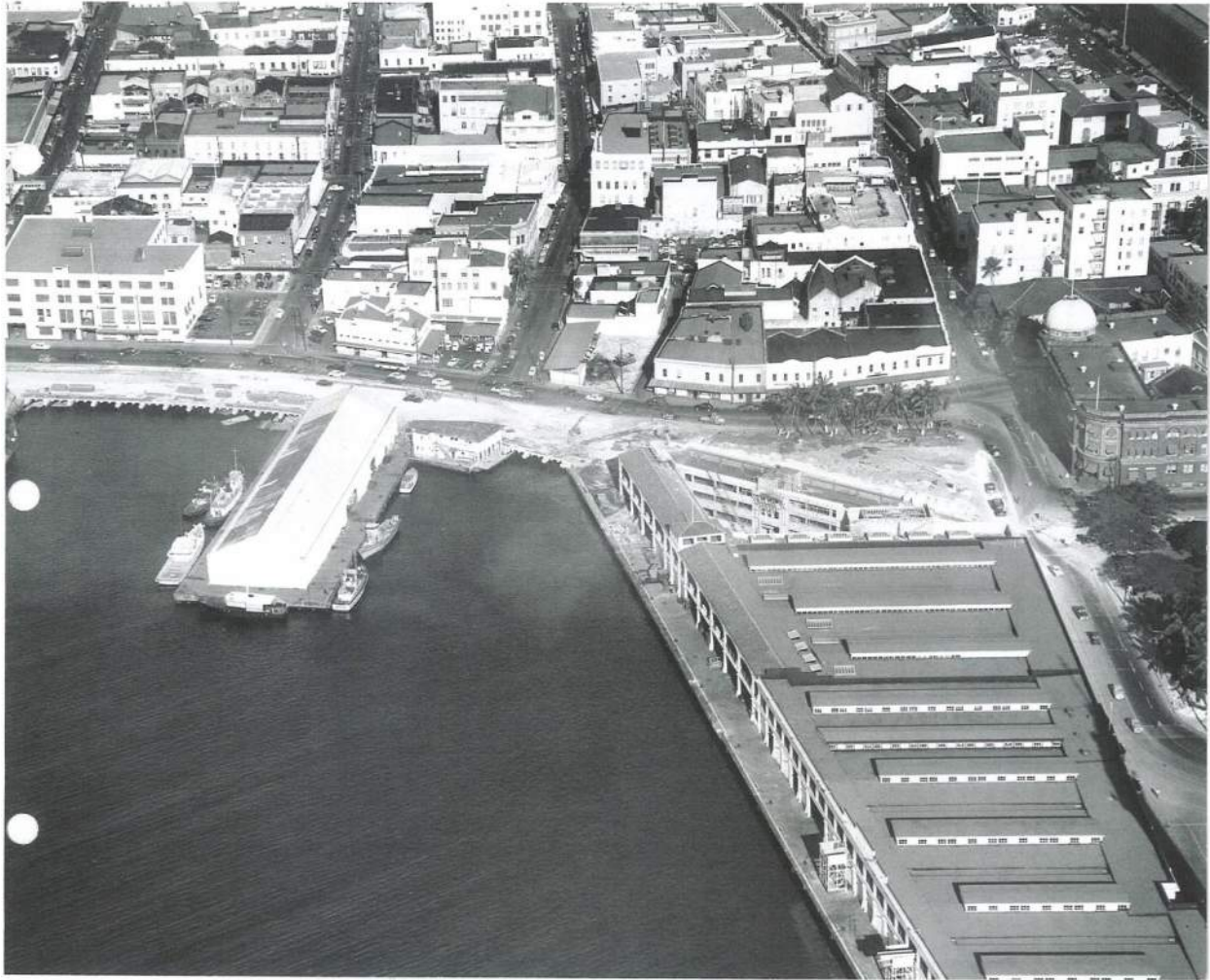


Figure 7. Aerial view of Matson Navigation Co. Building and South Nimitz Highway under construction, camera facing northeast. January 21, 1952

Location: Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum Library and Archives, Honolulu, Hawaii

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Figure 8: Aerial view of Matson Navigation Co. Building and South Nimitz Highway under construction, camera facing northwest. January 21, 1952

Location: Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum Library and Archives, Honolulu, Hawaii

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Figure 9. Matson Navigation Co. Building east façade, camera facing northwest. Ca. 1952

Location: Matson Navigation Co. Building, Honolulu, Hawaii



Photo 1 of 10. East façade, camera facing southwest



Photo 2 of 10. Southeast elevations (left) and west façade (right), camera facing north



Photo 3 of 10. East façade, camera facing northwest



Photo 4 of 10. West rear elevation, camera facing east



Photo 5 of 10. West (left) and southeast (right) rear elevations, camera facing southeast



Photo 6 of 10. Interior first-story lobby, camera facing northwest



Photo 7 of 10. Interior first-story lobby, camera facing southwest



Photo 8 of 10. First-story office space, camera facing northwest



Photo 9 of 10. Central stairwell, view from the first floor, camera facing north



Photo 10 of 10. Second-story hallway, camera facing northwest